

**AUGUSTA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STUDY
JOINT TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE
AND CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
ROOM 802, MUNICIPAL BUILDING, AUGUSTA, GEORGIA
WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 2008, 10:00 A.M.**

THOSE PRESENT:

Augusta-Richmond Co. Planning Commission

Paul DeCamp
Lynn Russell
Cristhine Kraft
Juriah Lewis

Columbia County

Ronnie Hutto

City of Augusta

Heyward Johnson
David Griffith

CAC

Jim Bartley, Chairman
Greg Capers
Terry Smith
Willie Bell

FHWA

Cornelius Davis

GA DOT

Vonda Everett
Cissy McNure

City of Aiken

Sandra Korbelik

SC DOT

Jennifer Hastings

City of North Augusta

Skip Grkovic

Lower Savannah COG

Amanda Sievers

Aiken County

Stephen Strohming
Gerald Jefferson

1. Consider approval of the minutes of the Joint Citizens Advisory Committee and Technical Coordinating Committee meeting held on March 12, 2008.

CAC – Mr. Capers moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Bell seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

TCC - Mr. Hutto moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Korbelik seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

2. Consider recommending an amendment to the FY 2009 Unified Planning Work Program as follows:

a) Add \$140,000 to Work Element 4.13 Special Studies to fund the Transit Development Plan

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. He stated the correct amount of the request is \$143,000. Georgia DOT informed the MPO that there are additional planning funds available to be programmed on the Georgia side for FY 2009. By adding the \$143,000, the total budget for the Special Studies on the Georgia side will be \$306,400. We are recommending that approximately \$40,000 of the total go to complete the ongoing regional freight study. We had originally anticipated funding all of the freight study to the FY 2007 and / or 2008 funds, but due to a policy changed by GA DOT, the FY 08 contract will not be extended past June 30, 2008. Because the freight study will not be completed until September, 2009 funds will have to be used. Also \$140,000 will be earmarked for the Augusta Public Transit to update the Transit Development Program. This was last updated in 2001 and should have been updated in 2006-07. The City of Augusta has agreed to provide the required ten percent match for this study. Assuming the Policy Committee approves this recommendation as well, we anticipate going out for proposals shortly. That leaves an additional \$126,000 left for other special studies on the Georgia side. We are in the process of soliciting project proposals from our partners in the study area and anticipate having specific project ideas for expenditure of those funds by the end of this month. This money would go to one or more special studies projects on the Georgia side. If additional funding is going to be programmed on the South Carolina side it will have to come from the SC PL funds. This request does not affect the South Carolina side of special studies funds which is budgeted at \$50,000 (total of federal, state and local match).

Mr. Johnson gave a brief summary of what the Transit Development Plan would include. This is like a five year plan. The consultant would ride the buses and talk to the passengers, look at ridership numbers, route miles, and things of this nature and come back with recommendations for addressing current and future needs of the transit system.

Mrs. Korbely asked what the total available funds are for the South Carolina side of the MPO. Mr. Strohinger stated there are over \$1.1 million in funds available with only \$200,000 committed at this time. There is a twenty percent match for these funds. PL funds have been used in the past to fund the Whiskey Road-Silver Bluff Road Connector Study (2004) and the Whiskey Road-Powderhouse Road Connector Study (2006).

Mr. Grkovic asked how long the unencumbered funds will be available. SCDOT has hinted around for several years that the money will be recaptured and redistributed to other MPOs.

GDOT's policy is that at the end of each program year, any unexpended funds go back into a pot and is redistributed a year later on a proportional basis.

The special study proposal should be for a project that addresses an issue or objective in the ARTS Long Range Plan and be transferrable to other locations in some form or fashion to other locations in the study area. In other words, you can take some aspect of the study and use it elsewhere or apply it to some another similar situation. The Whiskey Road corridor study addressed a problem identified in the Congestion Management Program. The CMS study is one way of identifying problems that can be addressed through a special study project.

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Note: There was a minor correction after the meeting to correct the amount of funds being added to the Special Studies. The total amount being added is actually \$140,000.

CAC – Mr. Smith moved to approve this amendment to the UPWP. Mr. Capers seconded. The motion was approved unanimously

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TCC - Mr. Johnson moved to approve amendment to the UPWP. Mr. Hutto seconded. The motion was approved unanimously

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3. Discussion of Special Studies Project submission.

This item was discussed with item #2.

Mr. Hutto announced that Columbia County would like to request to use part of the \$126,000 to fund an upgrade to an existing traffic study that is several years old.

Mr. DeCamp reminded Mr. Hutto that an application must be submitted in writing to the MPO.

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4. Discuss correction to Transportation Improvement Program FY 2008-2011 as follows:

a. Add \$1.5 million ~~g~~armark for U.S. 1 / 5th Street Interchange in North Augusta

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Mr. DeCamp presented this item. This earmark was inadvertently left out the current TIP. The funds were programmed in the 2005 Transportation Improvement Program and the subsequent financial plans did not include these funds. These funds are being brought forward as a correction and not an amendment.

5. Consider recommending an amendment to the ARTS Participation Plan to include the new requirements as outlined in the Statewide and Metro Planning Regulations for developing Transportation Improvement Programs.

Mrs. Kraft presented this item. FHWA and GADOT developed an amendment process for the State and all the MPOs for processing any amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program or Long Range Transportation Plan. This has been developed to incorporate changes as outlined in SAFETEA-LU. GA DOT recommends we add this new process into our Participation Plan. This process would apply only to amendments to projects in the Georgia part of the study area. On a related issue, Mr. Davis stated that an MPO can adopt / update a Transportation Improvement Program more frequently than every four years. At the very least, amendments should be made as needed.

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CAC – Mr. Capers moved to approve this amendment to the ARTS Participation Plan. Mr. Bell seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

TCC - Mrs. Everett moved to approve amendment to the ARTS Participation Plan. Mr. Hutto seconded. The motion was approved unanimously

6. Update on ARTS Test Network Subcommittee Meeting regarding Aiken LRTP / TIP Amendments to the following projects:

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- (a) The proposed Whiskey Rd (SC-19) – Powder House Rd (S-440) Connector (Alternative 8A map from the final study)
- (b) Widen Robert M. Bell Parkway / University Parkway (SC 118) from Jefferson Davis Hwy (US1/78) to SC-19, 2)
- (c) Widen University Parkway (S-2131)
- (d) Dougherty (S-419)
- (e) Pawnee Road Extension project
- (f) I-20 / Vaulcluse Road Interchange project

Mr. Grkovic interjected that these can be taken all in one motion to save time. We need to clarify these are non-guideshare funded projects and are listed under the State Infrastructure Bank funding.

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Mr. DeCamp stated the purpose of this agenda item is to report on the ARTS Test Network Subcommittee meeting held on April 23rd regarding the evaluation of these projects. The evaluation was a condition of the TCC/CAC project recommendation and Policy Committee approval in March.

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Mr. Jefferson stated that his office is working on the socio economic data for the Robert Bell Parkway and University Parkway projects. At the time this was submitted to GA DOT for the travel demand study, it included data from 2002. This will be updated to 2005 socio-economic data and the model run with the updated information. The socio economic data for the I-20 / Vaulcluse Road Interchange project will also be updated and submitted to the Policy Subcommittee for action.

Mr. Grkovic asked if the entire model used to evaluate this project will be updated for all the TAZs in the area. And if so, will it affect any of projects in the Plan at this time.

Mr. Strohmingher stated that any new data available or assumptions not included in the 2002 data will be changed and included the model.

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7. Consider approval to amend the Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program to the following North Augusta projects:

- a) East Buena Vista Avenue
- b) Atomic Road

Mr. Grkovic stated he understood at the last meeting that these projects not be changed until there was a better understanding of the South Carolina process for prioritizing transportation projects (see Act 114). Under the new state law there will be changes and the net result could change the scope of these two projects and could remove them from the priority list, which is not wanted.

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Mr. Strohmingher stated he didn't believe there was going to a large enough difference to change the East Buena Vista Avenue project and the Atomic Road project would be removed from this request.

Mr. Grkovic stated they don't want to change the scope of this project. SCDOT is working on evaluating the project. Preliminary work has been done on the change in scope, but don't believe it should be changed in the TIP at this time.

CAC – Mr. Smith moved to take no action on this item. Mr. Capers seconded. The motion was approved unanimously

TCC – Mr. Grkovic moved to take no action on this item. Mrs. Korbek seconded. The motion was approved unanimously

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8. Update on Regional Freight Study.

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. The initial public meeting on the project on April 15th. There was reasonable turnout and good input from the public. The consultant continues to finalize the freight profile document. You may have read in the last newsletter a brief summary of the basic statistics they are putting together as part of the profile. The project advisory committee is scheduled to meet again on June 2nd at which time an update will be presented by the consultant and we will start identifying specific deficiencies and start to get some idea about specific projects. The consultant has also been working on getting direct input from freight haulers in the region via a phone survey and we should be seeing a summary of those results as well at the June 2nd meeting. The project is on schedule at this time.

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9. Early Action Compact – An Air Quality Initiative

(a) Aiken County

Mr. Strohming presented this item. The Early Action Compact with EPA and South Carolina DHEC ended in December 2007. An interview was held with representatives from EPA Region 4 and the headquarters in Washington DC on what they consider the effectiveness of the EAC program. Ten questions were asked and they wanted our take on whether this was helpful or if they should consider doing this in the future for non attainment. It took about 1 ½ hours. They stated several times that the Early Action Compact will not be considered to be used for the new ozone standard or anything like that. Participation is ongoing in regards to the PM 2.5 early action measures.

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(b) Richmond County

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. On a regional perspective, the last stakeholder meeting was held on March 22nd. Forty to fifty people attended the meeting held at the Julian Smith BBQ Pitt. The draw for that particular meeting was obviously the release of the new ozone standards in mid-March by EPA. These new standards could have a direct affect on some part of the study area because under the new standards, the Richmond County monitors as well as the Aiken County monitors are in violation. We will have to have a particularly mild summer in order to avoid non-attainment for ozone next year. This new standard could be challenged in court.

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We are proceeding along with our air quality initiatives. Since the last stakeholder meeting, the Education and Outreach Technical Group has ramped up its activities. Some members distributed a variety of information at the Augusta Commons on April 26th at the “It’s a time to Care Family Fair”. More recently Crithine and other member of the committee have gone to a middle school in Richmond County to meet day long with a variety of classes. In addition, we just met with personnel from Fort Gordon and the Clear Air Campaign in Atlanta as a first step in introducing the commute options program to Fort Gordon. Over time other large employers in the region might be interested in

the program. These are the types of things we have to do to be able to show the State and Federal officials we are serious on the locally and regionally about doing what we can within the limits of our resources to educate the public about air quality and to take other steps as communities to improve air quality as well.

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10. Status of Projects:

(a) Georgia Highways

Ms. McNure presented this item.

- I-520 from US 1 to Gordon Highway – concept plan has been approved; includes interchange improvements at Deans Bridge Road
- William Few Parkway Extension – let date scheduled for October 2009
- Flowing Wells Road – let date scheduled for September 2008
- Alexander Drive – let date scheduled for March 2009
- Wrightsboro Road – 159 parcels to acquire; 45 options received, 65 acquired, 3 condemnations pending, final plans 80% complete
- Windsor Spring Road (Phases IV and V) – Public information meeting was held on April 21, 2008. Preliminary plans are 90% complete
- St. Sebastian / Greene Street Extension – this project was let in January and the award was deferred until April. Sunbelt Structures received the contract for \$30,306,988. Negotiations continue with the railroad. Demolition of a building is underway and should be complete by June 4th.

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(b) South Carolina Highways

Mrs. Hastings presented this item.

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- Palmetto Parkway Phase 2 – The SIB granted approximately \$18 million in additional funds towards the construction of this project. These funds would allow for the completion of the project scope items that were deleted due to the insufficiency of funds when the project was let. The items to be included would be the full five lane widening of Belvedere Clearwater Road, the multi-use path, US 25 widening, and the I-20 / US 25 interchange.
- Georgia Avenue Extension – Construction began in May 2007 and is scheduled for completion in September 2008
- Silver Bluff Road (SC 3020) – SCDOT conducted two traffic studies – one analyzing a three lane section and one analyzing potential intersection improvements. The 3 lane section showed a low level of service compared to a five lane section. The intersection analysis showed improvements in existing and future conditions at Richardson Lake Road, Woodside Plantation Drive (am) and Town Creek Road (am). It assumed signals at Richardson Lake Road and Woodside Plantation Drive. The improvements at Richardson Lake Road showed the most benefit (am & pm) without the additional capacity for through traffic that a five lane section would provide.
- East Buena Vista Avenue – A preliminary design field review was held on January 11, 2008. A possible change in project scope is being looked at for a new 3-lane typical section from Brookside Avenue to Barton Road. Approval from ARTS on the new scope and a

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determination that the logical termini are valid for the environmental document will need to be made to proceed on the project.

- 5th Street Bridge Interchange – Last spring SCDOT attempted to procure a design build contract for the project which was unsuccessful. A new RFP is being prepared by SCDOT with the anticipated advertisement date of May 19, 2008. If there is a qualified bidder for the project, construction can begin in late summer 2008.
- Dougherty Road –TB Bulldozing began construction on the project in late 2007. The project will provide dual left turn lanes onto SC 302 from Dougherty Road and signal modifications. The right turn lane from Silver Bluff Road to Dougherty Road is being approved as a STIP amendment in the May SCDOT Commission meeting. Engineering and ROW activities can begin shortly afterwards. Construction for this additional work is anticipated to begin in late 2008 or early 2009.

(c) **Augusta Public Transit**

Mr. Johnson presented this item. Fuel cost is the big issue APT is facing at this time. As of April 30th, APT has spent \$139,000 on fuel. The yearly fuel budget is \$330,000. By the end of the year the fuel costs will run approximately \$400,000.

- The Augusta Mall route was re-instated for 45 days. The Augusta Commission approved \$45,000 to operate this route. After the 45 days, the Commission will review the efficiency of operating this route with a full bus or running two buses with less crowding
- The driver was found to be not at fault for the accident that occurred last month that resulted in the death of a pedestrian at the intersection of 15th Street and Laney Walker Blvd. The pedestrian was found to have been walking with a “do, not walk” sign. The driver is back on duty but not on that route.
- Bus advertisements will begin shortly. Contracts have been signed. This should bring in \$4,000 – 5,000 per month in revenue.
- APT is in the final stages of a request for proposals for the Transit Development Plan. A selection committee will be formed to review the proposals.

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(d) **Aiken County Transit**

Mrs. Seivers presented this item. Rider surveys are still being taken and planning for new routes is underway. Adding any new routes next year is contingent on funding approval by Aiken County. There continues to be increases in ridership. A lot of positive comments have been received on the new logo on the buses

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11. **Issues and Concerns**

- (a) **Prior**
- (b) **Current / New**

There were no prior or current issues or concerns.

ADDENDUM

CAC – Mr. Smith moved to approve the addition of the addendum. Mr. Capers seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

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TCC – Mr. Grkovic moved to approve the addition of the addendum. Mr. Johnson seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

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12. Discuss Transportation Conformity Memorandum of Agreement.

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. This is a Memorandum of Agreement executed with South Carolina DOT, SC DHEC, US EPA and FTA. This is a part of the State Air Quality Implementation Plan in South Carolina. Our MPO and all others in South Carolina signed the original version of this MOA in 2002. SAFETEA-LU triggered changes in the Clean Air Act which in turn had ramifications for the MOA. This is just technical revisions to it that have been made in recent months. This is just to let you know, minor changes have been made and it will be presented to the Policy Committee for approval and execution by the Chairman of the Policy Committee.

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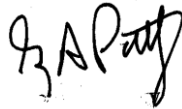
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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.



George Patty
Project Director